

No.158 Rs.

ANGULIMALA

— THE ROBBER WHO BECAME A SAINT

The Phantom Head Original

Having realised the cause of human suffering and the remedy thereof, Lord Buddha wandered from place to place to enlighten the people. His teachings concerned the forces that cause bondage and the means by which salvation can be achieved. He was received with respect wherever he went.

Prasenajit, the King of Kosala, who ruled from his capital, Shravasti, was a great admirer of Lord Buddha, although he was not converted to Buddhism.

In the forest on the outskirts of Shravasti, lived Angulimala, the dreaded highway robber who plundered and killed travelling traders. Fearing him, people eventually gave up travelling by the road that passed through his haunts. Though everybody shunned Angulimala, Buddha chose to cross his path. Then took place the historic meeting of the saint and the sinner. In that encounter between the forces of non-violence and violence, the former prevailed. Angulimala became a disciple of Lord Buddha.

This Amar Chitra Katha is an adaptation of the story of Angulimala from the Buddhist text, *PARAMATTHADIPANI* of Dhammapala.

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The Phantom Head Original

ANGULIMALA

LONG, LONG AGO, A KING CALLED PRASENAJIT RULED OVER KOSALA* FROM HIS CAPITAL, SHRAVASTI. ONE NIGHT WHEN HE WAS FAST ASLEEP...

...THE ROOM WAS SUDDENLY LIT BY FLASHES OF LIGHT. HE WOKE UP WITH A START.

* PART OF MODERN U.P.

THE NEXT MOMENT HOWEVER ALL WAS DARK AGAIN.

WAS IT A NIGHTMARE? WAS MY IMAGINATION PLAYING TRICKS ON ME? OR WAS I REALLY DAZZLED BY THE LIGHT FROM THE WEAPONS?

THE NEXT MORNING, ANY DOUBTS HE MIGHT HAVE HAD, VANISHED.

A STRANGE THING HAPPENED LAST NIGHT, YOUR MAJESTY!

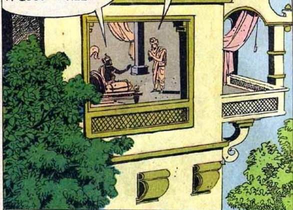
AT MIDNIGHT, THE WEAPONS IN THE ARMOURY AND IN EVERY HOUSE OF KOSALA, BLAZED, FOR A MOMENT, WITH A BRILLIANT LIGHT.

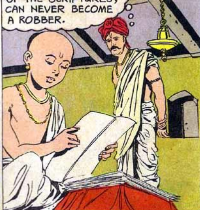
AT THAT MOMENT, IN THE HOUSE OF THE ROYAL PRIEST, GARGA —

HOW HANDSOME IS OUR NEW-BORN SON!

HE IS, NO DOUBT. BUT I AM WORRIED. IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIS BIRTH, STRANGE LIGHTS ISSUED FORTH FROM THE WEAPONS OF THE NIGHT-GUARDS.

WHEN THE PERTURBED GARGA CONSULTED A LEARNED ASTROLOGER —
I REGRET TO TELL YOU THAT YOUR SON IS GOING TO BE A ROBBER — A MENACE TO OUR PEOPLE.
GARGA WENT TO THE PALACE AND TOLD THE KING THE STORY.
AH! THAT EXPLAINS WHY THE WEAPONS SHONE SO BRIGHTLY LAST NIGHT!
YOUR MAJESTY, I CANNOT REAR A SON WHO IS DESTINED TO BE A MENACE TO THE KINGDOM.
THE SCRIPTURES SAY THAT ONE LIFE MAY BE SACRIFICED TO SAVE A HUNDRED. THEREFORE PERMIT ME TO PUT HIM TO DEATH.
NO! I WON'T ALLOW THE KILLING OF AN INNOCENT BABY!
LORD BUDDHA HAS TAUGHT ME TO BE-LIEVE IN THE INNATE GOODNESS OF EVERY LIVING CREATURE.

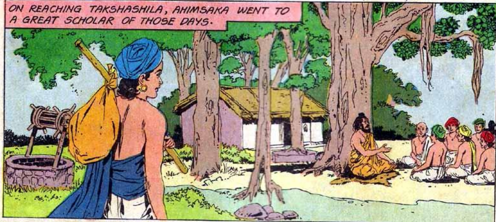


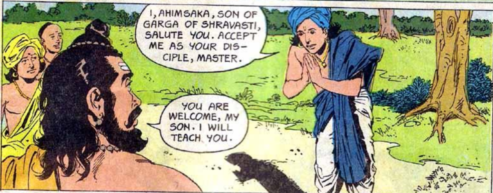






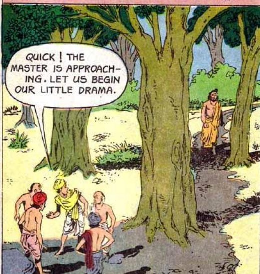
* A RENOWNED CENTRE OF LEARNING


ON REACHING TAKSHASHILA, AHIMSAKA WENT TO A GREAT SCHOLAR OF THOSE DAYS.

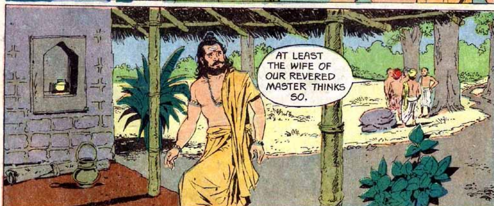

I, AHIMSAKA, SON OF GARGA OF SHRAVASTI, SALUTE YOU. ACCEPT ME AS YOUR DISCIPLE, MASTER.
YOU ARE WELCOME, MY SON. I WILL TEACH YOU.

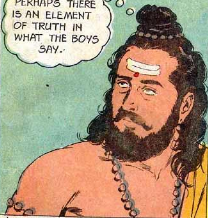

AHIMSAKA SOON WON THE HEART OF THE MASTER.
LOOK AT AHIMSAKA. WITHIN SUCH A SHORT TIME, HE HAS MASTERED WHAT YOU COULD NOT IN THE LAST THREE YEARS. HE HAS A GREAT FUTURE BEFORE HIM.

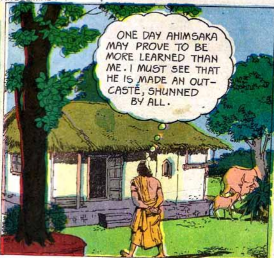

SUCH COMMENTS AROUSED THE JEALOUSY OF THE OTHER DISCIPLES.
AHIMSAKA THINKS TOO MUCH OF HIMSELF.
OUR TEACHER'S PRAISE HAS GONE TO HIS HEAD.
WE MUST DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

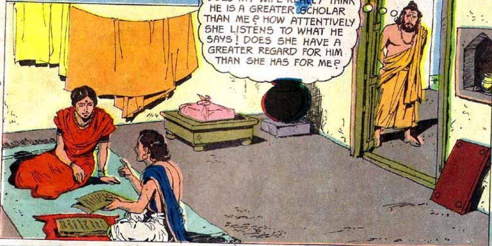

THEY HATCHED A PLOT TO ESTRANGE THE MASTER FROM HIS FAVOURITE DISCIPLE.
QUICK ! THE MASTER IS APPROACHING. LET US BEGIN OUR LITTLE DRAMA.


AHIMSAKA IS A GREAT SCHOLAR.
THAT'S WHY OUR MASTER PRAISES HIM SO.
INDEED, HE IS A GREATER SCHOLAR EVEN THAN OUR MASTER.


AT LEAST THE WIFE OF OUR REVERED MASTER THINKS SO.


THE MASTER BECAME THOUGHTFUL.
PERHAPS THERE IS AN ELEMENT OF TRUTH IN WHAT THE BOYS SAY.


ONE DAY AHIMSAKA MAY PROVE TO BE MORE LEARNED THAN ME. I MUST SEE THAT HE IS MADE AN OUT-CASTE, SHUNNED BY ALL.


WHEN HE ENTERED THE HOUSE —
DOES MY WIFE REALLY THINK HE IS A GREATER SCHOLAR THAN ME? HOW ATTENTIVELY SHE LISTENS TO WHAT HE SAYS! DOES SHE HAVE A GREATER REGARD FOR HIM THAN SHE HAS FOR ME?


WHATEVER THE TRUTH MAY BE, AHIMSAKA WILL HAVE TO GO.





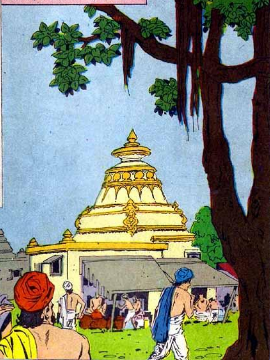




* BY BOWING TO HIM WITH PALMS JOINED

WHEN AHIMSAKA RETURNED TO SHRAVASTI —
WHY ARE YOU BACK SO SOON? HAVE YOU FINISHED YOUR STUDIES?
NO, FATHER. I WAS SENT AWAY. I INCURRED THE DISPLEASURE OF MY MASTER. BUT I ...
WHAT! INCURRED THE DISPLEASURE OF YOUR MASTER! DON'T SHOW ME YOUR ACCURSED FACE! GO AWAY FROM HERE!
WHAT HAVE I DONE TO DESERVE SUCH A FATE? WHAT SHALL I DO?


I WILL TRY TO MAKE A LIVING WITH WHAT LITTLE KNOWLEDGE I HAVE.


BUT AHIMSAKA'S EFFORTS TO FIND SOME WORK PROVED FUTILE.


EMPLOY A YOUTH WHO HAS INCURRED THE DISPLEASURE OF HIS MASTER? NEVER!


HE WAS SHUNNED BY ALL.
AHIMSAKA IS COMING THIS WAY.
CLOSE THE DOOR! I DON'T WANT HIM TO ENTER OUR HOUSE AND POLLUTE IT.






THEY SLAM THEIR DOORS ON MY FACE. WHY MY MASTER SENT ME AWAY, I STILL DO NOT KNOW. FATHER DID NOT EVEN WANT TO HEAR MY STORY.


DEEP IN THOUGHT, AHIMSAKA LEFT KOSALA.
WHAT WAS MY FAULT? WHY HAVE I BEEN TREATED SO CRUELLY? THEY LABEL ME A SINNER. BUT IT IS I WHO HAVE BEEN SINNED AGAINST.


SUDDENLY —
SURRENDER WHATEVER YOU HAVE IF YOU VALUE YOUR LIFE.


NO! NO! NO!


TAKE THIS! AND THIS! THERE! I AM GIVING YOU ALL THAT I HAVE!

MERCY! PLEASE HAVE MERCY ON ME.

DISGUSTED, AHIMSAKA LET HIM GO.

HE HAS SHOWN ME THE WAY. I WILL BE A HIGHWAY ROBBER. I'LL BE MAKING A LIVING WHILE I TAKE REVENGE ON THE SOCIETY THAT REJECTED ME.

LATER, IN THE EVENING, A FLEET OF BULLOCK CARTS CARRYING MERCHANDISE PASSED THAT WAY ON THEIR WAY TO KAUSHAMBI.

HALT!

MY GOD! A ROBBER!

* LITTLE FINGERS









*A GARLAND OF LITTLE FINGERS


AS SOON AS THE MERCHANTS WERE MASSACRED BY ANGULIMALA—
COME, MY FRIENDS! THIS FEAST IS FOR YOU.

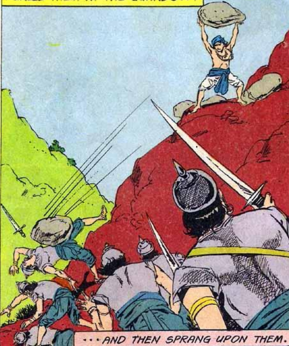

AHA! HOW DID YOU ESCAPE MY SWORD?


SPARE MY LIFE. HAVE MERCY ON ME.
MERCY? WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?


I WANT TO LIVE FOR THE SAKE OF MY LITTLE SON...
AND I WANT TO KILL YOU FOR YOUR LITTLE FINGER; HA! HA!


AT LAST THE TERROR-STRICKEN SUBJECTS TURNED TO PRASENAJIT.
YOUR MAJESTY, DELIVER US FROM ANGULI-MALA.
I WILL COMMAND MY FOREST GUARDS TO CAPTURE THE NOTORIOUS MURDERER.


AS THE FOREST GUARDS ENTERED ANGULIMALA'S HAUNT —
A WHOLE ARMY OF THEM! GOOD! THAT MANY MORE FINGERS FOR MY GARLAND!


LIFTING UP HUGE BOULDERS, ANGULIMALA HURLED THEM AT THE GUARDS...
...AND THEN SPRANG UPON THEM.

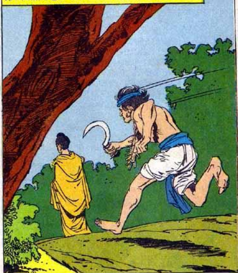

A FEW, HOWEVER, WERE ABLE TO ESCAPE WITH THEIR LIVES.

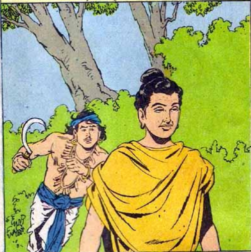

WHEN THEY REPORTED TO PRASENAJIT —
JUST ONE MAN, AND YOU WERE HELPLESS AGAINST HIM!


THAT EVENING, THE ROYAL DRUMMER WENT ROUND THE CITY.
GIVE EAR! GIVE EAR! PEOPLE ARE ADVISED TO AVOID ANGULIMALA. THOSE GOING TO KAUSHAMBI SHOULD TAKE THE ROUTE VIA MAGADHA...


ANGULIMALA WAITED IN VAIN FOR VICTIMS.
MY GARLAND HAS BEGUN TO WITHER. I NEED NEW FINGERS! I WISH SOMEONE WOULD PASS THIS WAY.


SUDDENLY HE SPOTTED A MONK WALKING BY.
MY PRAYER HAS BEEN HEARD!
HALT!





AT LAST EXHAUSTED BY THE CHASE, ANGULIMALA PAUSED.

O MONK, STOP! STOP MOVING.

I AM NOT MOVING. I AM AT REST. IT IS YOU WHO ARE IN PERPETUAL MOTION.


WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
MY MIND IS AT REST. YOU ARE YET TO FIND PEACE OF MIND, MY CHILD.

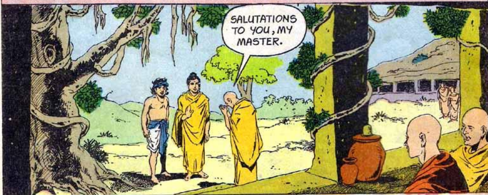

MY CHILD! HE CALLS ME HIS CHILD! NO! HE CANNOT MEAN IT.


DON'T YOU KNOW WHO I AM? I DON'T WANT YOUR PREACHING. I WANT YOUR LITTLE FINGERS.
TAKE THEM, MY SON, IF IT MAKES YOU HAPPY.


ALONG WITH YOUR FINGERS, I TAKE YOUR LIFE TOO!
BY ALL MEANS DO, MY SON, IF IT BRINGS YOU PEACE OF MIND.


ANGULIMALA COLLAPSED AT THE FEET OF THE MONK.
GET UP, MY CHILD.
MASTER!


MASTER, HENCEFORTH I WILL NEVER KILL.


THE MONK BROUGHT HIM TO THE MONASTERY ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF SHRAVASTI.
SALUTATIONS TO YOU, MY MASTER.


ANATHAPINDIKA, I HAVE BROUGHT YET ANOTHER BROTHER—ANGULIMALA.
THE LOVING MONK WAS NONE OTHER THAN LORD BUDDHA.

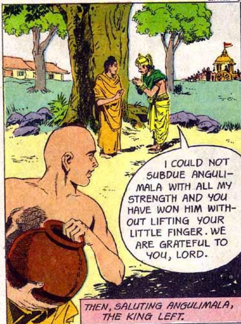
THE NEXT MORNING, PRASENAJIT VISITED THE MONASTERY. THE KING HAD COME TO PAY HIS RESPECTS TO THE MASTER.

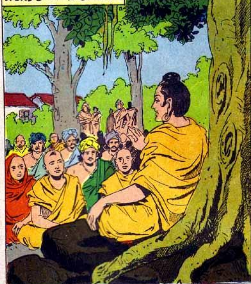
IT LOOKS AS THOUGH YOU HAVE STARTED ON AN EXPEDITION.

YES, MASTER. I WANT TO EXTERMINATE THAT MONSTER—ANGULIMALA. I HAVE COME FOR YOUR BLESSINGS.






I COULD NOT SUBDUE ANGULI-MALA WITH ALL MY STRENGTH AND YOU HAVE WON HIM WITH-OUT LIFTING YOUR LITTLE FINGER. WE ARE GRATEFUL TO YOU, LORD.
THEN, SALUTING ANGULIMALA, THE KING LEFT.


ANGULIMALA BECAME DEVOTED TO BUDDHA. HE LISTENED TO THE MASTER'S WORDS OF WISDOM.


HE NURSED THE SICK.
I AM FEELING BETTER NOW, ANGULIMALA. YOU MAY REST.
DON'T MIND ME, BROTHER. YOU SLEEP.


ONE DAY WHEN ANGULIMALA WENT TO BEG FOR HIS FOOD.
DO YOU WANT MORE RICE ?
YOU ARE GENEROUS, MY CHILD. MAY YOU, YOUR MOTHER AND FATHER BE BLESSED.





...WHERE HE SPENT MANY A SLEEPLESS NIGHT.

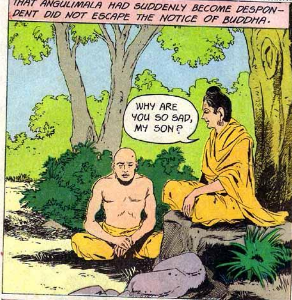
I AM AN ORPHAN. YOU MADE ME ONE!

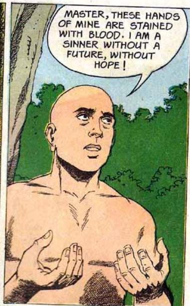
MURDERER!

YOU KILLED MY FATHER.

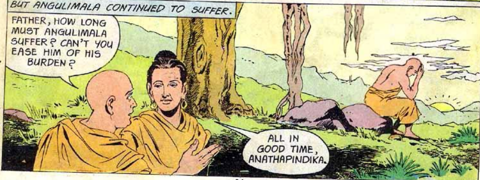
OH! NO, NO!

YES, YOU ARE A MURDERER!

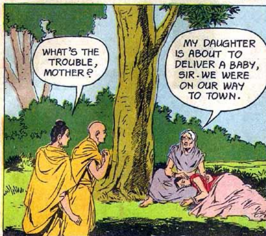

THAT ANGULIMALA HAD SUDDENLY BECOME DESPONDENT DID NOT ESCAPE THE NOTICE OF BUDDHA.
WHY ARE YOU SO SAD, MY SON?

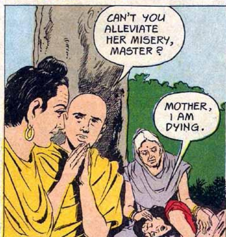

MASTER, THESE HANDS OF MINE ARE STAINED WITH BLOOD. I AM A SINNER WITHOUT A FUTURE, WITHOUT HOPE!


WHY CHILD, REPENTANCE IS THE ONLY FIRE THAT IS CAPABLE OF BURNING SINS ALREADY COMMITTED. YOU ARE ON THE RIGHT PATH.
BLESS ME, MASTER. YOUR PRESENCE AND YOUR WORDS ARE SOOTHING.

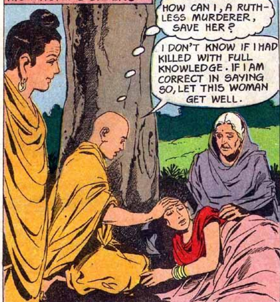

BUT ANGULIMALA CONTINUED TO SUFFER.
FATHER, HOW LONG MUST ANGULIMALA SUFFER? CAN'T YOU EASE HIM OF HIS BURDEN?
ALL IN GOOD TIME, ANATHAPINDIKA.


THEN ONE DAY, BUDDHA TOOK ANGULIMALA WITH HIM ON HIS ROUNDS. AS THEY PROCEEDED—
OH, GOD! I CAN'T BEAR IT...AH!... OOH!...
MASTER, SOMEONE SEEMS TO BE IN PAIN. LET US HURRY.


WHAT'S THE TROUBLE, MOTHER?
MY DAUGHTER IS ABOUT TO DELIVER A BABY, SIR. WE WERE ON OUR WAY TO TOWN.

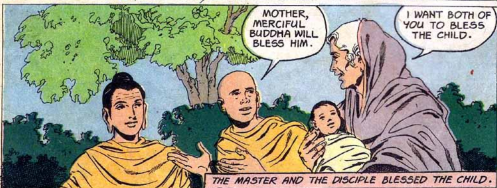

CAN'T YOU ALLEVIATE HER MISERY, MASTER?
MOTHER, I AM DYING.


MY SON, BLESS THE WOMAN AND SAY: "WHEN I KILLED PEOPLE, I DID SO OUT OF IGNORANCE. IF I SPEAK THE TRUTH, LET THE WOMAN GET WELL."
BUT MASTER...
OH, SIR, DON'T SAY NO! PLEASE DON'T! SAVE HER.


WITH MUCH RELUCTANCE, ANGULIMALA OBEYED HIS MASTER'S ORDERS.
HOW CAN I, A RUTHLESS MURDERER, SAVE HER?
I DON'T KNOW IF I HAD KILLED WITH FULL KNOWLEDGE. IF I AM CORRECT IN SAYING SO, LET THIS WOMAN GET WELL.

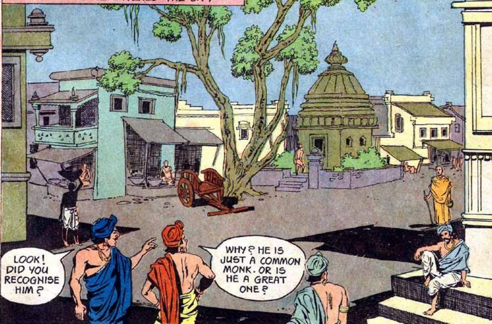

AND THE TWO RESUMED THEIR JOURNEY. SUDDENLY —
OH, SIR, PLEASE WAIT.
IT'S THE OLD WOMAN. HER DAUGHTER MUST BE DYING.


THE OLD WOMAN APPEARED, BRINGING NEWS NOT OF DEATH, BUT OF LIFE.
SIR, YOU BLESSED MY DAUGHTER AND SAVED HER LIFE. BLESS HER LITTLE SON, TOO.


I WANT BOTH OF YOU TO BLESS THE CHILD.
MOTHER, MERCIFUL BUDDHA WILL BLESS HIM.
THE MASTER AND THE DISCIPLE BLESSED THE CHILD.

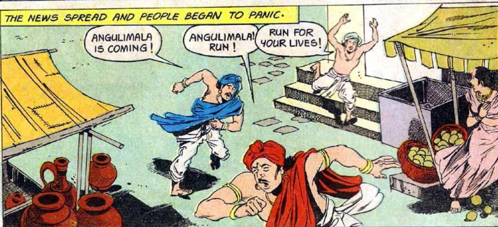
WHEN THE OLD WOMAN WENT AWAY—
ANGULIMALA, AT LEAST NOW ARE YOU CONVINCED THAT YOU HAVE OVERCOME YOUR PAST DEEDS?
I AM, MASTER, THANKS TO YOU.

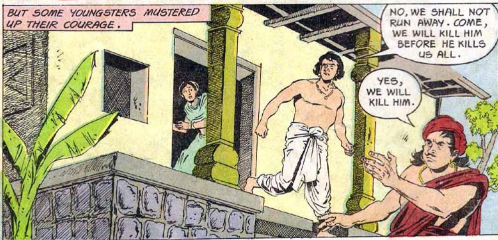
SON, YOU NO LONGER NEED ME. YOU MUST WALK ALONE IN THE WORLD.
IF YOU INSIST, I WILL. BUT IT IS YOU WHO HAVE GIVEN ME THE STRENGTH TO DO SO. BUDDHAM SHARANAM GACCHAMI.*



* I TAKE REFUGE IN BUDDHA


YOU FOOL, HE IS NONE OTHER THAN ANGULI-MALA IN DISGUISE.
ANGULIMALA? HAS HE COME HERE BECAUSE PEOPLE NO LONGER PASS BY HIS HAUNTS? GOD HELP US!


THE NEWS SPREAD AND PEOPLE BEGAN TO PANIC.
ANGULIMALA IS COMING!
ANGULIMALA! RUN!
RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!


BUT SOME YOUNGSTERS MUSTERED UP THEIR COURAGE.
NO, WE SHALL NOT RUN AWAY. COME, WE WILL KILL HIM BEFORE HE KILLS US ALL.
YES, WE WILL KILL HIM.

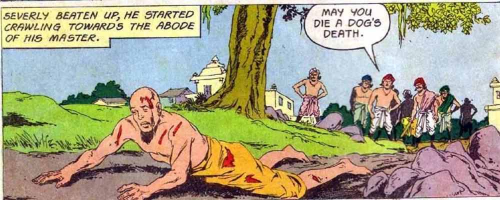
ARMING THEMSELVES, A FURIOUS MOB APPROACHED ANGULIMALA.

LOOK! A CHILD HAS COME OUT TO OFFER RICE TO THE MONSTER IN DISGUISE.











*I TAKE REFUGE IN BUDDHA







AND ANGULIMALA BREATHED HIS LAST.

ANGULIMALA WAS A GREAT SOUL. HE CONQUERED VICE, CRUELTY AND ANGER. HE HAS ATTAINED NIRVANA.

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